

The Shakespeare Newsletter

VOL. 1, No. 7

"Knowing I lov'd my books, he furnish'd me . . ."

December, 1951

SIX SHAKESPEAREAN PAPERS AT 66th MLA MEETING

THE Sixty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association will feature addresses by six eminent Shakespeareans when it convenes at Detroit on December 27th. Several hundred members have usually attended the MLA Shakespearean lectures and the proposed program should be equally successful.

Prof. Roy W. Battenhouse of Indiana University is Chairman of the Shakespeare Section at which the first three papers will be presented on the morning of Friday the 28th in the Michigan Room of the Hotel Statler. Prof. Matthias A. Shaaber of the University of Pennsylvania is Secretary of the Section. The following statements of theme and content were prepared by their authors especially for readers of *The Shakespeare Newsletter*.

"THE POLITICAL PROBLEM IN SHAKESPEARE'S LATER HISTORY PLAYS"

by Irving Ribner, Ohio State University

Shakespeare's history plays from *Richard II* through *Henry V* deal with one of the basic political problems of his age, and one on which, as a dramatist fulfilling the function of historian, he could not remain neutral. In the initial conflict between *Richard II* and *Henry Bolingbroke* we have mirrored a conflict between, on the one hand, inefficient rule with the sanction of hereditary right and the divinely ordained natural order, and on the other, efficient government, national unity and the ability to crush civil insurrection, but without the divine sanction of hereditary right. Which is better for England? The question is proposed and answered throughout the Lancastrian tetralogy. The doctrine of the plays is not, as has often been supposed, a mere reiteration of Elizabethan commonplace.

"ORDER OUT OF CHAOS IN SHAKESPEARE'S TROILUS AND CRESSIDA"

by George W. Meyer, Tulane University

The problem of *Troilus and Cressida* is whether behind its deliberate picture of chaos there is the meaning and the order of art. The play shows that unworthy war causes military disorganization and sexual immorality. Shakespeare emphasizes the folly of war fought for private honor over a strumpet. The *Troilus* and *Cressida* affair repeats the original Menelaus-Helen situation. *Troilus* loves a whore who is taken away from him. A false sense of honor impels him to fight for her. The Achilles-Patroclus relationship reveals a similar pattern on the homosexual level. The result is death or frustration for everyone involved in the action.

"IS LEAR A STOIC PLAY?"

by Kenneth O. Myrick, Tufts College

Lear is often called pagan because of its pessimism, and Stoic because the sympathetic characters are said to exhibit, or achieve, the Stoic ideal. Pessimism, however, is entirely consonant with Elizabethan Christianity. Moreover, a very unstoical pity and grief characterize Edgar, Kent, and Cordelia; and the spiritual goal which *Lear* and Gloucester achieve is far from the Stoic's unconquerable self-sufficiency. On the contrary, Shakespeare, by quiet but powerful imaginative suggestion, enforces at once the humanistic view of man's greatness and the Christian view of his final dependence not on himself but on divine grace.

At a meeting in the Ballroom later in the afternoon Prof. Hardin Craig of the University of Missouri will present his paper suggesting "a possible new approach to the literature produced by the Elizabethan mind." Prof. Craig's précis follows:

"SHAKESPEARE AND THE HERE AND NOW" by Hardin Craig, University of Missouri

Traditionally the humanities included philosophy, history, and science as well as arts and letters and should still do so. Philosophy now promises a new and a broader epistemology, and science, both physical and biological, has abandoned the distinction between the material and the spiritual in favor of one universe. Science, moreover, decides that symbolization is the means of human enlightenment and that communication is the means of human progress. Therefore, the humanities are again centrally placed, since these two processes are their immediate concern. Shakespeare, whether he knew it or not, made his mental determinations in a time-space continuum, and in certain ways his works seem to reflect the freedom of a pre-Cartesian world and to illustrate the originality provided for the human mind by the theory of relativity.

The two final papers will be presented at the Bibliographical Section in the Ivory Room on Saturday afternoon under the Chairmanship of Prof. Fredson Bowers of the University of Virginia. Prof. William B. Todd of Salem College is Secretary. Précis of the addresses prepared by their authors for SNL readers follow:

"COMPOSITORIAL AND EDITORIAL VARIANTS: A NEW TECHNIQUE FOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INVESTIGATION IN KING LEAR"

by I. B. Caulthen, Jr., Hollins College

This paper is an *ad interim* report on a new technique in bibliographical investigation as it has been applied to Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The first step in the investigation has been the identification of the compositor who set the Folio text of *Lear*. With his identification secure, an analysis has been made of his work in other parts of the Folio where he set type from previously printed copy that had not undergone any substantial editorial intervention. Certain compositorial characteristics emerge from these "control plays," and this information has been applied to the Folio *Lear* in an effort to distinguish between those unauthorized compositorial variants and the authorized variants, the editorial changes, that are present there.

"THE PROBLEM OF TROILUS AND CRESSIDA: THE MANUSCRIPTS FOR QUARTO AND FOLIO"

by Philip Williams, Duke University

The quarto of 1609 represents the only substantive edition of *Troilus and Cressida*, and F, because it was printed from a copy of Q, is a derivative edition. But the F text was produced by collating a copy of Q with a manuscript. This paper attempts to define the origin, nature, and authority of the manuscripts that were used for the two texts. Evidence is presented to show that the manuscript in the possession of the Folio editors was the author's foul papers that had been worked over by the company bookkeeper, and that the manuscript from which Q was printed was a fair copy of the foul papers made by the author himself.

Season's Greetings

— The Editor

NEW PROJECT TO REPRODUCE 300 SHAKESPEAREAN ITEMS

IN AN exclusive release to *The Shakespeare Newsletter* Dr. Henry W. Wells of Columbia University has announced a gigantic project to reproduce over 5000 plays by the microprint process. Reproduction of the plays under the sponsorship of the Theatre Library Association has already begun.

Of utmost importance to Shakespeareans will be a "Shakespeare sequence, with analogues and adaptations, coming to over three hundred items." Every available means will be used to obtain for reproduction all the important folio and quarto versions of interest to Shakespeareans. "Especially important for the study of Shakespeare," wrote Dr. Wells who is Editor-in-Chief of the project, "will be the earlier dramas to which his own works are specifically indebted and the long list of adaptations of Shakespeare and of plays based upon his. Restoration, Augustan and Romantic versions of the great playwright are now well known to be extremely numerous and revealing of the taste of successive generations and what they were or were not able to see in the works of the master. Prompt copies and copies with noteworthy illustrations will be included, though in most cases not later than 1800. Much material here should be made easily available that is now known to be valuable documentation for Shakespeare's stage history, but distinctly difficult to obtain."

Variants and Manuscripts Included

Also of interest are the numerous other Elizabethan plays which will be presented in one or variant versions as appears necessary. The 5000 plays or versions of plays will include many hitherto not generally available including some from manuscript sources.

It is expected that the project will include all British printed plays to 1700, all British plays by known authors and many by unknown authors in the 18th century, and virtually all American plays printed to 1830.

The complete series of plays consolidating over 25,000 pages will fit in an area as large as a bureau drawer and cost approximately \$1000 per set. The projecting mechanism will cost about \$195.

Although no sets will be broken to supply the Shakespearean materials, SNL was informed that if at least 50 orders for the Shakespeare sequence are received, the Readex Microprint Corp. will supply this portion of the project without subscription to the whole. Full details are available from the RMC at 18 East 41st Street, New York City.

The TLA believes that "with the fairly wide dissemination of this collection a new era in theatrical study will have been achieved."

S N L G R E E T S T H E M L A A T D E T R O I T

The Shakespeare Newsletter

Published at 749 Franklin D. Roosevelt Dr., N.Y. 9

Editor & Publisher

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Department of English

Brooklyn College, School of General Studies
Brooklyn 10, N. Y.Published Monthly — September through May
Annual Subscription \$1.00

Vol. 1, No. 7

December, 1951

**The Shakespeare Newsletter
Volume I - 1951**

With this issue *The Shakespeare Newsletter* completes its first volume and the trepidation with which we started has left us. Louis B. Wright of the Folger Shakespeare Library has written that SNL is "exceedingly interesting and well done," and Leslie Hotson "would not miss any appearance of your excellent publications." For these comments and hundreds similar to them, we are extremely grateful.

In our brief existence subscriptions have been received from faculty members in over 150 colleges, 50 libraries, 4 foreign countries, students, and miscellaneous bardolotrists. The welcome cooperation of scholars, readers, and dramatic organizations, is rapidly making SNL the central repository for all that is of importance in current Shakespeareana.

For our thousand new readers at the MLA Convention we review the previous issues.

We have printed reviews of the important plays, an interview with Marchette Chute, and articles on: Shakespeare and Cervantes' Examination Boners, Prices of Folios and Quartos in the 18th century, The Stratford Jubilee, The Saga of the Stolen Folio, *The Winter's Tale* in France and England, Hamlet's Delay, The Story Behind Hamlet's Ghost, The Renaissance in Shakespearean Staging, etc.

We have covered as news items: the Shakespeare Festivals at Hofstra College; Ashland, Oregon; San Diego, California; and Stratford-upon-Avon; the announcement of Alan Keen's work on Hall's Chronicle; the cornerstone laying of the Memorial Theatre dedicated to Shakespeare in London, the discovery of a possible sketch of Shakespeare in England, formation of The Shakespeare Stage Society and the Mermaid Theatre in London, announcement of two \$1000 prize contests by the Folger Library, etc.

We have reported on and given précis of Shakespearean address delivered at the English Institute at Columbia University, Mason Croft in Stratford, and MLA meetings in Colorado and Louisiana.

We have printed almost a hundred brief biographical, literary, dramatic, and historical notes of Shakespearean interest in addition to the above.

We have printed book reviews and, not less important, advertisements announcing about forty books of Shakespearean interest.

And finally, in less than a year, we have printed 78 digests of important articles from 39 periodicals.

An Annual Index to make all this readily available for reference will be issued.

We have been told that the digests alone are worth the price of subscription and they have been made longer and more effective.

As subscription increases every feature of the past will be augmented and new features will be added.

SNL invites the support of its new and old readers and will make every attempt to prove worthy. May we hear from you soon?

Book Review:

**SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORICAL
CHARACTERS**

Publication of *Shakespeare's Characters: A Historical Dictionary* by W. H. Thomson with thirty-two genealogical tables and 320 pages of text will provide many of us with further opportunity to say with Gladstone that we have learned most of our English history through Shakespeare.

Devoted as it is to the exposition of the characters of English history, one can well understand the inclusion of *Macbeth*, but one must then wonder at the exclusion of *Lear* and *Cymbeline*. We might also have wished that the text had been more adequately cross-referenced and that some of the valuable features of Francis Griffin Stokes' *Dictionary of the Characters and Proper Names in Shakespeare* had been adapted. However, Mr. Thomson, a former History Master of Manchester, has fulfilled his intention to provide teachers and students with easy access to the true history of Shakespeare's characters rather than a blow-by-blow description of what they do in the plays. In this he is more complete though more peripheral than Stokes and has succeeded within his limits. References to places where the characters appear are appended to each article. (The British Book Centre, N. Y., \$5.00).

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ELIZABETHAN STAGING**Hofstra vs Stratford**

An exclusive interview with Dr. John C. Adams of Hofstra College on his return from The Stratford Shakespeare Festival revealed Dr. Adams' continued faith in his principles of replica staging. Although Dr. Adams was greatly impressed by the distinguished direction and talented casts of the Festival productions, he asserted that the Hofstra production of *I Henry IV* last May had much in it that "Shakespeare experts would have found interesting. Their stage," he declared, "is a very big one in capacity, but they use no great part of it, and it brought to my mind a rather mixed up stage apparatus rather forward so that it could be seen well, but though seen well did not do much to clarify the play and to give it a local habitation and a name. The staging, in short, gave some variety to the spectacle but it did not help in the interpretation of the play."

Prof. Adams' comment on the set which was utilized for the four plays of the tetralogy was that it did not fit 2 *HIV* "with any great adequacy" and seemed to have been constructed with *Henry V* in mind. "Shakespeare's own stage which we rebuilt at Hofstra is the stage for which he wrote his plays; therefore, as I understand them, and the theory behind them, the stage helps make the play, the play helps make the stage. The spectacle is the result of both."

The seven acting areas of the Hofstra stage provided maximum movement for the action. No upstairs action had to take place downstairs nor did they have to "make some illogical solution of the problem which frankly confused the audience." The forward stage at Hofstra was uncluttered and the stage posts served as Shakespeare had intended them to. "The Stratford scene could have no great depth because the background of the stage was fairly close to the front, and, therefore, the stage production had to be spread across a flat surface and could not have the advantage of being flat at some times and deep in others and vertical at third times. So for many reasons I think that we should be proud of the staging here at Hofstra of our Shakespeare production."

Prof. Adams admitted that his gymnasium production with wretched sight lines and acoustics could not offer a perfect example of Elizabethan production, but he did say "that scholars would find our stage more interesting, from a production standpoint." The author, model builder, and, and college president concluded that "professional producers would find our stage very suggestive and useful as guides to future productions of their own."

GRAND TOUR: London's ERIC ELLIOTT has taken a company to India to give full length Shakespearean plays. NORMAN MARSHALL'S company (SNL, p. 11) gave 99 recitals of parts of plays in a 5½ months Indian tour last season.

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**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS
AT COLUMBIA**

The Milton Smith-Gertrude Keller production of *The Comedy of Errors* at Columbia University, December 5th to 8th was performed with professional excellence and indeed most of the important members of the cast have had some professional experience. Although the two Antipholi (Drew Elliott and Steve Russell) and the twin Dromios (George Ross and Milton Carney) were so well made up as to defy detection, none of the confusion usually present in the classroom was felt by the audience. The play moved, except for some too obvious stage business, to a rapid, dynamic, and well managed denouement.

Victor Edmond Jacoby of Adelphi College designed a well-contrived set which circumvented the unity of place convention by cleverly using the fringe areas of the stage to place the four houses required in the production. An Italianate Solinus (Earl Dossey), a medieval conjurer (A. J. Petersen), an Elizabethan Luce (Francine Wallace), an abbe, a trick crowing cock, a well with running water, a moving ship in the background, and a cast of over thirty extras added the color, atmosphere, and comic incongruity required for an evening of interesting entertainment.

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London, W.C. 2**MISCELLANY**

RARE PERFORMANCE: On Jan. 30th Equity Library Theatre will produce *Timon of Athens* under the direction of LEO KERZ. RUSSELL COLLINS will star in the play. (45 W. 47th St., N. Y. C.)

PRODUCTION NOTES: When SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER came to NY with his *Antony & Cleopatra* company on Dec. 11 he brought the 34 foot revolving stage used in London. . . . ORSON WELLES' London *Othello* which has been described as "magnificent" may be brought to NY soon. It opened in London on Oct. 18 and ran to Dec. 15. . . . PETER BROOK'S production of *The Winter's Tale* starring JOHN GIELGUD at the Phoenix in London has broken the performance record for the play set in 1887. Gielgud will next act in and direct *Much Ado* and follow that with direction of *Richard II*. . . . The Brattle Theatre Company of Cambridge, Mass. under the direction of ALBERT MARRE has just completed its *King Lear-Macbeth* repertory. Star WILLIAM DEVLIN first appeared as Lear in 1936 and has since performed the role over 150 times. . . . MARGO JONES' repertory company in Dallas, Texas will include a revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. . . . CHARLES J. McGAW, director of Theatre Production at the Ohio State University staged Shakespeare's infrequently produced *King John* from Dec. 7th to 15th. Prof. McGaw's acting version was staged on an architectural unit set in 13th century costume. . . . The Norwich Players' 13th season at the Maddermarket Theatre presented *Love's Labour's Lost* from Dec. 10th to the 19th.

OLD VIC ACTIVITY: The MICHAEL LANGHAM production of *Othello* was presented at the Berlin Festival last September. . . . Old Vic's 1951-2 season includes *Othello*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by TYRONE GUTHRIE, *King Lear* directed by HUGH HUNT, and Bristol Old Vic's production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. After being closed for ten years, the Old Vic celebrated its first new anniversary on Nov. 14th. *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Othello* have already been presented. During its first year 292,875 people have attended its 364 performances. . . . DONALD WOLFIT and ROSALIND IDEN have resigned from the Company.

GRAND OPERA AT STRATFORD: When Sir BARRY JACKSON was director of the Memorial Theatre he hoped to arrange a season of operas founded on Shakespeare's plays. A step in that direction was made when DR. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' *Sir John in Love* was presented at the Wood Street Hall under the direction of TOM HARRISON by KATHERINE THOMPSON'S Clarion Singers in conjunction with the Birmingham Masque and Opera Guild. Dr. Williams' interest in *The Merry Wives* stems from the time he directed music for the play when he was musical director to Sir FRANK BENSON, Memorial Theatre Director, until 1911. The text of the opera was completed in 1929 and is taken almost entirely from the play.

CAVEAT FOR PRODUCERS: In replying to WALTER KERR'S "Theatre in the Red" (*NY Times*, Aug. 12) HERMAN SHUMLIN pointed out that production costs are so high that although KATHARINE HEPBURN'S *As You Like It* played to capacity audiences for a whole NY season and for a season tour, it did not pay for itself until almost the end of its combined run. HOUSEMAN'S *King Lear* lost about \$100,000, and we recall that OLIVIA De HAVILAND'S *Romeo and Juliet* lost about \$170,000. (*NY Times*, Aug. 26, 1951)

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE: At Sotheby's famous auction rooms in London on Nov. 7th a first Folio was sold for £780, an F2 for £120, an F3 (1664) for £290, and an F4 for £200.

Make Way for the Asterisk!

Mr. G. Legman who last Spring (in the May issue of *American Speech*) demonstrated the plagiarism and error in Eric Partridge's lexicographical method is now at work preparing a supplement to Eric Partridge's *Shakespeare's Bawdy for Modern Language Notes*. Mr. Legman will give full credit for any "items" you have discovered. (858 Hornaday Place, N. Y. 60, N. Y.)

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**SCOTT, FORESMAN
AND COMPANY**Chicago New York Atlanta
Dallas Pasadena San Francisco**RICHARD II AT ST. JOHNS**

A production of *Richard II* at St. John's University (Nov. 30, Dec. 1) under the direction of Father Lawrence Lonergan, C.M., gave to the play a peculiar poignancy that is not usually felt when the play is seen in another environment. The appeals of Richard and other characters to divinity had a credible ring and made of Richard, at least, a more sentimentalized and lamentable character—a lost soul whose pleas to God and his ministering angels go unheeded when the cause of Justice is being served.

A stern Bolingbroke (Henry Miller) and a crafty, Iago-like Northumberland (Harold Lea) are made to engineer the *coup d'etat* which is made all the more credible by a masterful bit of direction. The play opens as Richard is playing chess. After the charges are heard all the characters exit but Bolingbroke who walks to the chess board, picks up the king, looks at it, crushes it in his palm, then dashes it down before the throne. While this touch symbolically supplies the soliloquy (that Shakespeare never wrote) and characterization necessary to make credible this performance, it debases Bolingbroke to a level of intrigue and chicanery that Shakespeare never intended. No doubt Fr. Lonergan wanted to defend his God anointed King and succeeded admirably.

The Richard of Fr. Lonergan was performed with astonishing excellence by Anthony Grabowski, a promising young actor who brought to the part an ability to convey every type of mannerism and emotion the part required.

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REVIEW of PERIODICALS

ELIZABETHAN WOMEN

With many references to contemporary literature and citation of an unpublished Folger Library ballad, CARROLL CAMDEN of The Rice Institute examines the character of Imogen in *Cymbeline* and finds in her a complete and composite picture of Elizabethan women. The diatribe of Posthumus when he learns of Imogen's alleged adultery is a reflection of the usual Elizabethan attacks on women as being inconstant, "dissembling with their husbands," adulterous, etc. There are, however, many other more acceptable qualities revealed and these are the virtues which "tend to rehabilitate women in the eyes of the audience." Imogen is beautiful, virtuous, knows when to keep silent, is not jealous, reads the best literature, "sings like an angel," sews well, is a good cook, has a good disposition, etc. Her only fault is that she disobeyed her father in marrying Posthumus. Imogen is, however, exonerated because Ludovicus Vives tells us that it was the responsibility of the father to provide female companions whereas Imogen tells us that Posthumus had been "bred" her "playfellow." With Juliet and Desdemona she would have served the Elizabethans "as another warning to fair women of the suffering and tragedy which would devolve on those undutiful daughters who disobey their fathers." ("The Elizabethan Imogen," *The Rice Institute Pamphlet* (Studies in English), XXXVIII:1, pp. 1-17, April, 1951.)

SHAKESPEARE'S PUNS

Samuel Johnson's Augustan objection to the pun is attacked by M. M. MAHOOD who points out the value of Shakespeare's puns in the interpretation of Shakespeare's preoccupations, the poetic process, the "play's pattern of thought," etc. The title of the article comes from Thomas Hood's remark that Fatal Cleopatra "died, historians relate, through having found a misplaced asp-irate." The realization of Shakespeare's punning power helps interpret difficult lines in *Macbeth* ("Banke and Schoole of time"), and in *Hamlet* where "more than kin, and lesse then kinde" is explained with *kind's* three meanings. As in real life, Shakespeare's characters punned under difficult conditions. Mercutio and John of Gaunt pun before dying, and Leontes puns on the word "play" under tension of great jealousy. "The function of Shakespeare's puns is to connect subject and object, inner force with outer form, the poetic vision with the characters in action that are its dramatic embodiment." Where Shakespeare plays on the key words of plays, such as *nature* in *Lear*, *coil* in *Hamlet*, and "Put out the light" in *Othello*, we see that the ambiguity of a pun "serves Shakespeare's two major interests in tragedy and comedy alike: the theme of appearance and reality, and the theme of ambivalence whereby each man kills the thing he loves." The study of Shakespeare's wordplay is better pursued via G. Wilson Knight's definition of a play as "an extended metaphor" than along the lines of critics "who are in search of psychological realism." However, because a play is a dramatic illusion, a complete victory of either symbolist or realist is impossible though conciliations may sometimes be reached. ("The Fatal Cleopatra: Shakespeare and the Pun," *Essays in Criticism*, 1:3, pp. 193-207, July, 1951.)

TWO HOURS TRAFFIC OF OUR STAGE

W. A. ARMSTRONG comments that the recent attempts on the Mermaid Stage "to imitate the pronunciation and acting style of Elizabethan players" were unsuccessful in increasing the tempo of acting, but that Nugent Monck's *Tempest* was done in less than two hours in June, 1949, and that the same producer's 2600 line *Lear* was done in two hours and twenty minutes. The studies of Prof. Alfred Hart indicate that 20 lines of blank verse per minute was the normal tempo of Elizabethan stage delivery.

NUGENT MONCK of the Norwich Maddermarket Theatre insists that Hamlet's advice to speak "trippingly on the tongue" is today unheeded, and that act intervals are provided to benefit refreshment concessions. In order to increase speed of production "cut your impressive star" (who inserts psychological business)—"your too-impressive electrician," (who fades and brightens lights slowly)—"your scene designer" (who demands time to shift properties)—"and your popular comedian" (who gives comic business in dumb show). And if all speak "clearly and quickly," two hours will probably be achieved. ("Elizabethan Acting," *Theatre Newsletter*, VI:135, p. 6, Nov. 24th.)

TEMPO OF DRAMATIC DELIVERY

The attempts of John W. Draper of West Virginia University to develop a method of indicating the tempo of speech delivery in Shakespeare's plays is strongly attacked by R. B. LE PAGE of Birmingham. The English writer denies that elisions and short vowels indicate rapid tempo and that "cacophonous consonantal combinations" tend to retard delivery. He declares that it is impossible to base any conclusions on Elizabethan printing of the spoken word, that the two hours traffic is impossible in the longer plays, that elision is often purely metrical, that indications of rapid delivery are often offset by the importance of the lines which require emphatic delivery, and that ratios can not be used to express tempo as a whole. An edition of the plays with the deduced tempos in the margin would therefore be of little value because the "position of a line in the architecture of a speech," the manner in which a thought comes to the speaker, and the actor himself determine the speed of utterance. ("The Dramatic Delivery of Shakespeare's Verse," *English Studies* [Amsterdam], XXXII:2, pp. 63-8, April, 1951.)

OSCAR J. CAMPBELL *Columbia University*

The Living Shakespeare

Here in one volume are the complete texts of 22 plays of Shakespeare. Dr. Campbell has supplied informative glosses and annotations for each play, and they are placed conveniently at the bottom of each text page. In addition, the author has written several essays, in one of which he makes use of the latest discoveries of scholarship and the latest critical theories about Shakespeare's work. 1949—\$5.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, N. Y.

NOTA BENE

In an article accepted for publication long before the recent controversy on the "upstart crow," (CP, SNL, 1:5, p. 22, Oct. 1951) SIDNEY THOMAS of Queens College cites a passage from Cupper's *Sermons* (192) in which vaunting in "other men's feathers" is an indication of plagiarism. Caution is therefore suggested before the plagiarism theory is completely discarded by the disciples of Peter Alexander who would say that the lines mean only that Shakespeare was "presuming to compete with his betters as a writer." ("The Meaning of Greene's Attack on Shakespeare," *MLN*, LXVI:7, pp. 483-4, Nov. 1951.)

AMERICAN WHIGS AND SHAKESPEARE

That Henry Norman Hudson was not too objective a Shakespearean critic is revealed by JOHN STAFFORD of the University of California who reviews Hudson's mid-nineteenth century criticism and finds him using Shakespeare to further his own Whig principles. Hudson was a conservative, a member of the "Old Americans" group. To him Shakespeare was "humble and receptive," his thoughts and characters wholesome, he could "inform men in the best reason for living," he wrote "simply to gain an honest and an honorable livelihood," he had a reverence for the past, he "never attempts to show his respect for religion and law by reviling ministers and magistrates," nor did he show all poor men as good and rich men as bad. As another "Old American" said, "libidinous youth" would not find food for their "mean imaginations" in Shakespeare. Shakespeare is defended from those "Young Americans" who would sneer at him as not being a reformer. Hudson reviles the fanaticism of reformers who expect an "equal advance" in all things, who seek for freedom and dignity in insubordination. An excellent example of Hudson's method is revealed in his defense of Desdemona who had been attacked for not having been a staunch defender of women's rights. Hudson's influence was no doubt an influence on Whitman who wrote in the *Brooklyn Eagle* that Shakespeare had "much in him ever offensive to democracy." (Henry Norman Hudson and the Whig Use of Shakespeare, *PMLA*, LXVI:5, pp. 649-61, Sept. 1951.)

TOWN AND GOWN RIOT

Annoyed at Worthington's Miner's use of his ear to attribute *Coriolanus* to Webster in defiance of literary history, and outraged by his interpretation of Shakespeare in his article "Shakespeare for the Millions" (*Theatre Arts*, XXXV:6, pp. 58-9; 94, June, 1951), SAMUEL F. JOHNSON of New York University writes a scathing attack on the TV director and his work. *Coriolanus* is not modern because it attributes character to home environment, but because it deals with "the slowly changing data of human nature and experience, which form after all the communicable subject matter of all art." Plutarch's portrait of Coriolanus written 1500 years before Shakespeare's play is more modern in its psychological analysis. Johnson also attacks Miner's justification of modern dress for *Coriolanus* on historical grounds and points out that the extant 1595 illustration of *Titus* shows five of the seven figures in Roman dress. Furthermore, remoteness is as necessary in tragedy as is "conflict between people" which Miner says is all that is necessary. We cannot identify ourselves without paths unless there is remoteness of time, place, and social position. Still furthermore, the conflict is not always between two people but between a man and a situation or "between two situations in which the same man is involved." The task of the dramatist is to make his protagonist's feelings in a given situation convincing. Mr. Miner's generalized clichés are serious when directors use them to distort Shakespeare. The Bard survives TV productions, Olivier's *Hamlet*, Welles' *Macbeth*, Evans' *Richard II*, de Havilland's *Romeo and Juliet*, et al. Perhaps the millions, vitiated by sentimentalized art in all forms, deserve what they are getting, but there would be no harm in "giving them their Shakespeare straight" if uncorrupted producers, directors, and actors could be found. ("Shakespeare without ear—The Protest of a Professor," *Theatre Arts*, XXXV:10, pp. 38-9. Oct. 1951.)